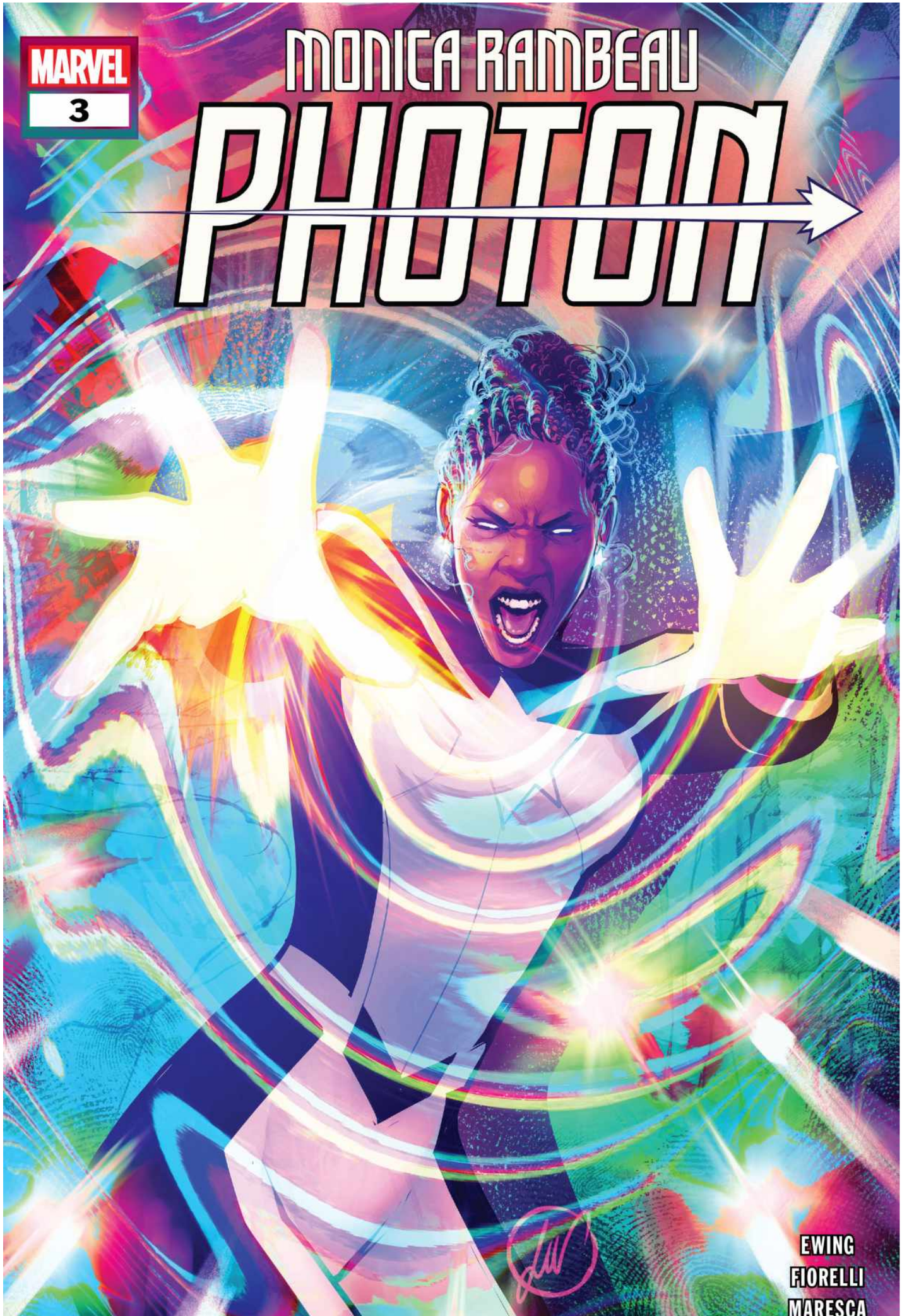
MARVEL
3
MONICA RAMBEAU
PHOTON
EWING
FIORELLI
MARESCA

When New Orleans Harbor Patrol Lieutenant **Monica Rambeau** destroyed a super-weapon, she gained the ability to convert her body into any form of energy! Inheriting the "**Captain Marvel**" title, Monica has since used her powers to protect others as a member of the **Ultimates**, **Thunderbolts**, and even as leader of the mighty **Avengers**. Whatever team she may join or name she may go by, her heroism will never waver--for she is . . .

MONICA RAMBEAU
PHOTON

After a stressful day--returning a cosmic artifact to **Doctor Strange**, fighting off a brilliant scientist turned super villain and dealing with unrelenting family pressure--**Monica** took a break... out in deep, uncharted outer space.

And then she suddenly awoke on the deck of her boat. First, Monica encountered a new, unfamiliar version of the all-too-familiar cosmic being called the **Beyonder**. Then, out of the blue, Monica's **Avengers** teammates from years past arrived--acting as though no time had passed, but mentioning events that never occurred, like the deaths of Monica's parents. But when she teleported the team to her parents' home to prove them wrong, the door opened to reveal **Doctor Voodoo**, A.K.A. Jericho Drumm, A.K.A her... husband?!

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I ALWAYS HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT MONICA'S *WORK* FRIENDS BUT NEVER GET TO *MEET* Y'ALL.
YOU HAVE GREAT TIMING. I JUST PICKED UP THOSE BEIGNETS.
THANK YOU, JERICHO!
OKAY. OKAY.
IT'S *CAFÉ DU MONDE!* I *LOVE* THIS STUFF.
COFFEE, DEAR?
WHEN I WENT *OUT* INTO DEEP SPACE, I MUST HAVE...CROSSED OVER SOMEHOW? TO ANOTHER *PLANE* OF *EXISTENCE.*
THAT SOUNDS A LITTLE *OFF-THE-WALL,* DON'T YOU THINK?
CRAZY IS *RELATIVE.*
THOR, YOU'VE GOT *POWDERED SUGAR* ALL OVER YOUR FACE, BOO.

THE BEYONDER PULLED THIS BEFORE. SUMMONED A RANDOM COMBINATION OF PEOPLE TOGETHER FROM ACROSS SPACE, TIME AND EXISTENCE JUST BECAUSE THEY FELT LIKE IT...
MOI?
AND THEN PEOPLE TRY TO PLACATE THEM BY EXPLAINING HUMAN EXPERIENCES THAT THEY CAN NEVER REALLY UNDERSTAND AS AN ALL-POWERFUL BEING.
YES, BUT AS WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED, THE BEYONDER IS INTERESTED IN YOUR DECEASED MOTHER.
SHE IS NOT DECEASED!
MON, SWEETIE. WE WERE ALL AT THE FUNERAL. I KNOW IT'S BEEN HARD...
BZZT BZZT
GLAD TO KNOW THAT EVEN IN WHATEVER GODFORSAKEN CORNER OF A PARALLEL UNIVERSE I'M TRAPPED IN, I STILL HAVE GOOD CELL SERVICE.
BZZT BZZT
MONICA? HOW ARE YOU, BABY?
MAMA?! HOW TOTALLY NOT SURPRISED I AM TO HEAR FROM YOU.
SHE'S HALLUCINATING.

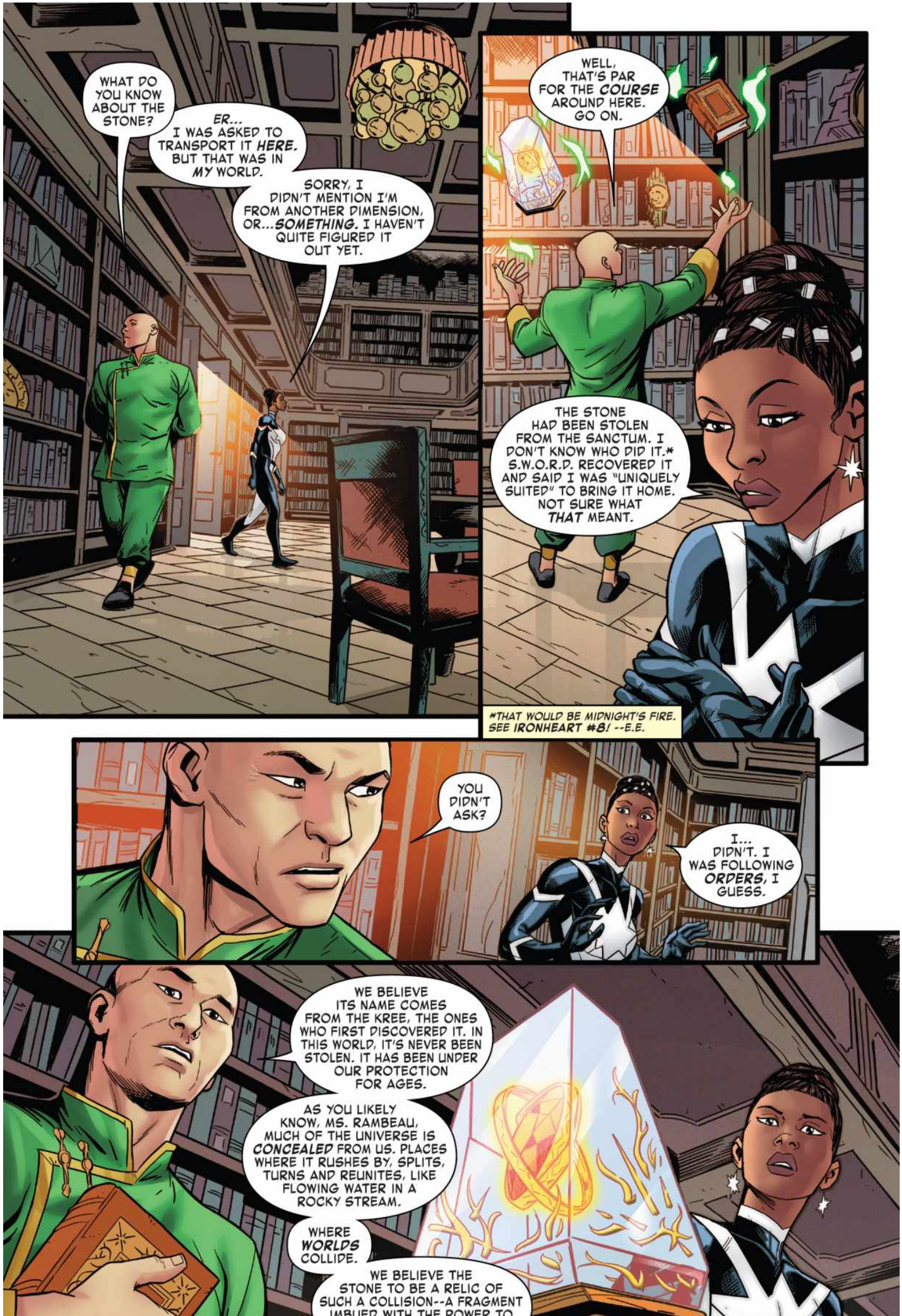
BABE--
JUST CALLING TO CHECK IN ON YOU.
YES, AND CALEB WAS ASKING ABOUT YOU.
MMM-HMM. THANKS, MAMA. AND IS DADDY THERE WITH YOU?
CALEB. MY COUSIN, OF COURSE. WELL, I'LL BE RIGHT OVER TO SEE Y'ALL.
MY LOVE. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO, BUT YOUR MOTHER PASSED. A WHILE AGO NOW. AND YOU DON'T HAVE A COUSIN NAMED CALEB. NOW LET'S--
NO, I'M DONE HERE-- WITH WHATEVER THIS WHOLE MESS IS AND WITH WHOEVER YOU PEOPLE ARE. I'M OUT.
MIGHT IT BE POSSIBLE TO PREPARE MORE BEIGNETS?

MAMA? DADDY?
HELLO, SWEETHEART.
OH, MONICA. SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE. I HAVE AN URGENT PROBLEM--
--WHAT'S A NINE-LETTER WORD MEANING "AIMING HIGHER, ASPIRATIONAL"?
I--I DON'T KNOW, DAD. WHERE'S CALEB?
OH, COME ON, NO IDEA AT ALL? SAYS HERE THE WORD IS LATIN.
HE SHOULD BE DOWN SHORTLY. IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR HIM TO GO TO PRACTICE.
HUH?
I'M READY, UNCLE FRANK!
OH, HI, BIG CUZ! YOU COMING TO MY GAME TOMORROW?
I...I'LL TRY TO BE THERE, CALEB.
YOU KNOW WHAT, EXCUSE ME, Y'ALL. I NEED TO DIP. I'LL CATCH YOU LATER.

OKAY, Y'ALL. AS I *TOLD* YOU, MY MOTHER IS *FINE.* HOWEVER--
YOU'VE GOT TO BE *KIDDING* ME.

THINK, MONICA, *THINK.* YOU'RE IN THE WRONG UNIVERSE. WHICH... OKAY, THAT *HAPPENS.* BUT THIS UNIVERSE ISN'T *CONSISTENT.* IT KEEPS FLIP-FLOPPING ALL OVER THE PLACE.
THE BEYONDER SAID THEY WEREN'T DOING THIS. SO IT WOULD HAVE TO BE SOMETHING *PRECEDING* THEM. SOMETHING THAT BROUGHT THEM HERE...
SNAP
THE STONE OF HALA.
I'VE GOT TO GO BACK AND SEE *STRANGE.*

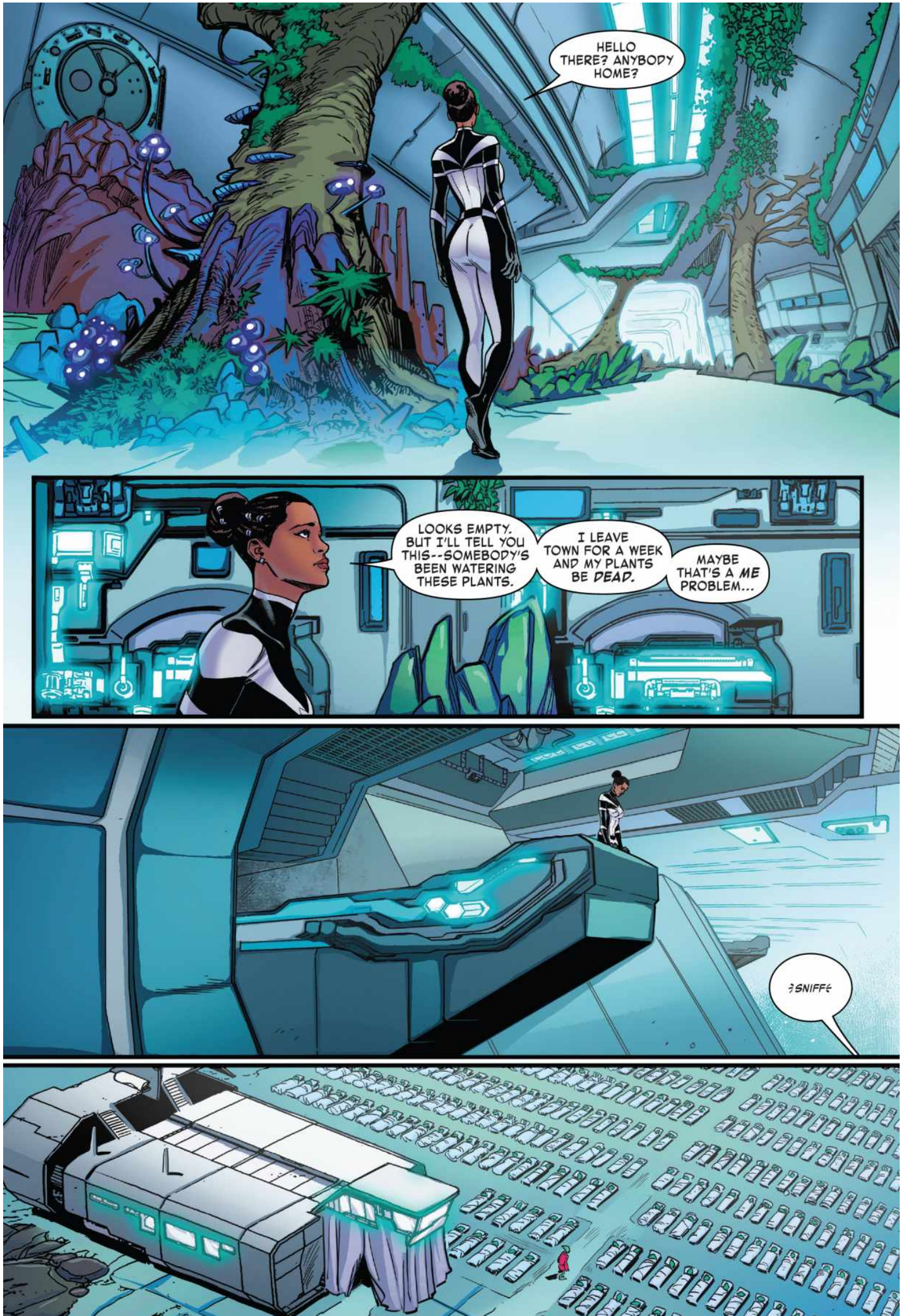
THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM,
NEW YORK CITY.
I'D BETTER GO IN THE POLITE WAY SO THAT I DON'T END UP STARTLING SOMEBODY AND GETTING TURNED INTO A FROG.
I NEED TO PREP MYSELF MENTALLY. STRANGE COULD HAVE NEVER HEARD OF ME BEFORE, OR HE COULD BE A SIXTH-GRADER. DOCTOR STRANGE, BUT MAKE IT DOOGIE HOWSER.
DING-DONG
MONICA! GOOD TO SEE YOU. SURPRISED YOU RANG THE BELL.
HI, WONG. IS STEPHEN IN?
HM?
I'M HERE TO SEE STRANGE.
WELL, WE'VE GOT THAT, SURE. AND MYSTERIOUS AND ENIGMATIC. LOTS OF OMINOUS TOO. TAKE YOUR PICK.
OF COURSE. WHY DID I THINK THIS WOULD GO AS I EXPECTED? THIS STONE OF HALA THING...
AH, THAT I KNOW TOO WELL. HAPPY TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT. THOUGH I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYONE BRING IT UP SINCE BEFORE I BECAME SORCERER SUPREME.

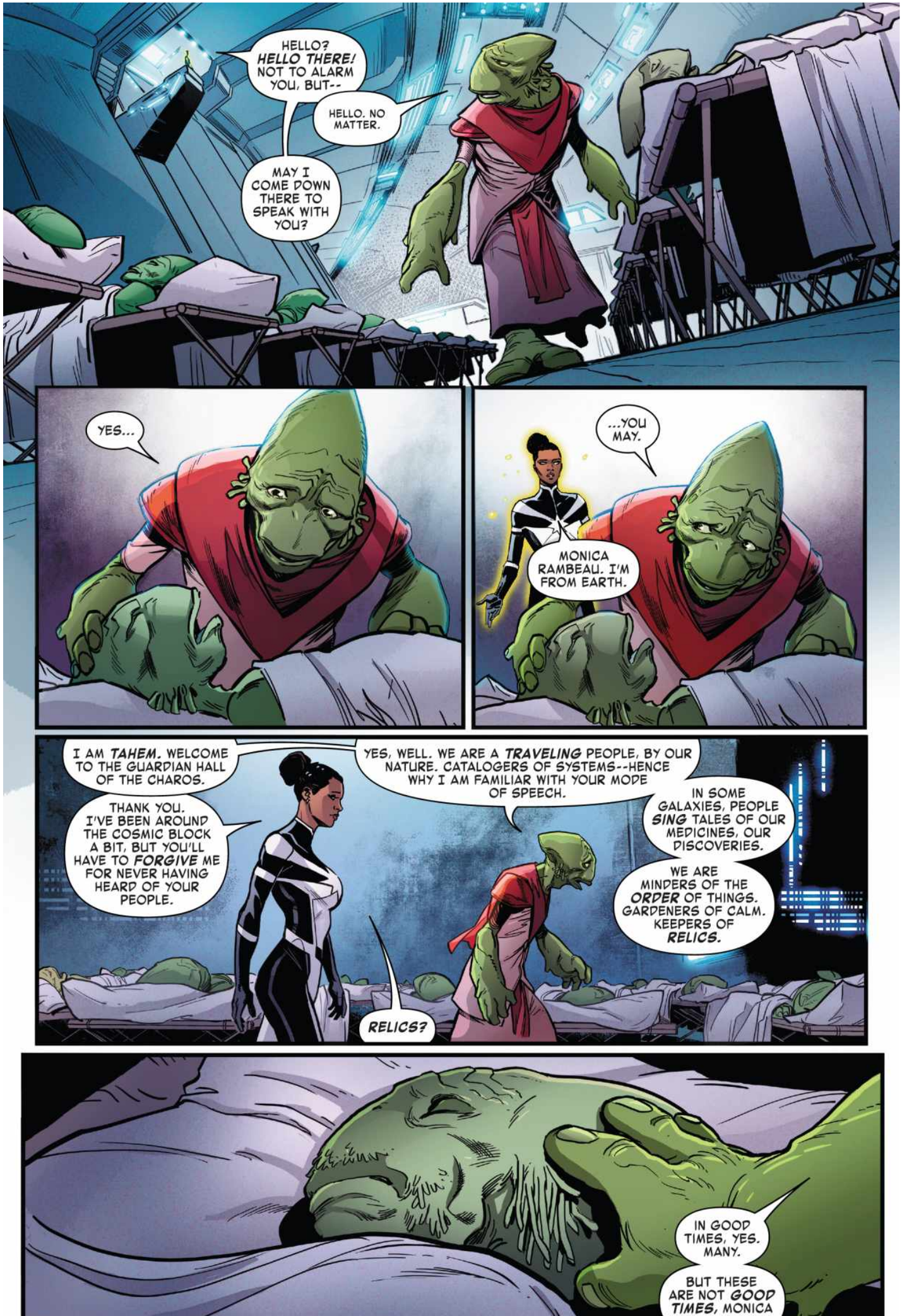

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE STONE?
ER... I WAS ASKED TO TRANSPORT IT HERE. BUT THAT WAS IN MY WORLD.
SORRY, I DIDN'T MENTION I'M FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, OR...SOMETHING. I HAVEN'T QUITE FIGURED IT OUT YET.
WELL, THAT'S PAR FOR THE COURSE AROUND HERE. GO ON.
THE STONE HAD BEEN STOLEN FROM THE SANCTUM. I DON'T KNOW WHO DID IT.* S.W.O.R.D. RECOVERED IT AND SAID I WAS "UNIQUELY SUITED" TO BRING IT HOME. NOT SURE WHAT THAT MEANT.
*THAT WOULD BE MIDNIGHT'S FIRE. SEE IRONHEART #8! --E.E.
YOU DIDN'T ASK?
I... DIDN'T. I WAS FOLLOWING ORDERS, I GUESS.
WE BELIEVE ITS NAME COMES FROM THE KREE, THE ONES WHO FIRST DISCOVERED IT. IN THIS WORLD, IT'S NEVER BEEN STOLEN. IT HAS BEEN UNDER OUR PROTECTION FOR AGES.
AS YOU LIKELY KNOW, MS. RAMBEAU, MUCH OF THE UNIVERSE IS CONCEALED FROM US. PLACES WHERE IT RUSHES BY, SPLITS, TURNS AND REUNITES, LIKE FLOWING WATER IN A ROCKY STREAM.
WHERE WORLDS COLLIDE.
WE BELIEVE THE STONE TO BE A RELIC OF SUCH A COLLISION--A FRAGMENT

WHY DO YOU LOOK DISAPPOINTED?
I GUESS I WAS THINKING THIS THING MIGHT BE ON THE FRITZ SOMEHOW, YOU KNOW? IT'S JUST SITTING THERE NICELY IN ITS LI'L BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JAR.
I DON'T REALLY SEE HOW IT COULD BE CAUSING MY CURRENT PROBLEMS.
OH! EXACTLY WHAT PART OF THE UNIVERSE DID IT COME FROM?
THAT'S HARD TO SAY. IT BEARS TRACES OF A CERTAIN ENERGY SIGNATURE INDICATING THAT IT IS LIKELY FROM OUR GALAXY--
PERFECT.
--BUT LIKELY FAR BEYOND--
NOT TO BE RUDE, BUT COULD YOU HUSH FOR JUST A MOMENT?
THAT'LL DO. THANK YOU KINDLY.
MY PLEASURE. UNTIL NEXT TIME, MS. RAMBEAU.
THE WAY MY DAY HAS GONE, WONG, I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER SEE YOU AGAIN. NOT IN THIS WORLD, ANYWAY.
WELL, I'LL BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ONE.

LET'S SEE. IT'S SOMEWHERE 'ROUND ABOUT...
...HERE.
EXCEPT...
...THERE'S NOTHING.

CAME ALL THIS WAY AND THERE'S NO ANSWER. NOT A THING OUT HERE TO SEE.
OH. WHAT WAS I THINKING?
THE *VISIBLE* LIGHT SPECTRUM IS FOR AMATEURS. NOTHING TO SEE...
...BUT *EVERYTHING IS HERE.*
PHEW! STELLAR NURSERIES FULL OF *EMBRYONIC* STARS, AND UV ENERGY COMING IN *HOT,* AND NEUTRON STARS JUST BUBBLING OVER LIKE A POT OF GRITS AND COLLIDING AND SHOOTING OFF GAMMA RAYS EVERY WHICH WAY!
IT'S A *PARTY,* BABY! AND...
...THAT.


HELLO THERE? ANYBODY HOME?
LOOKS EMPTY. BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS--SOMEBODY'S BEEN WATERING THESE PLANTS.
I LEAVE TOWN FOR A WEEK AND MY PLANTS BE DEAD.
MAYBE THAT'S A ME PROBLEM...
SNIFF

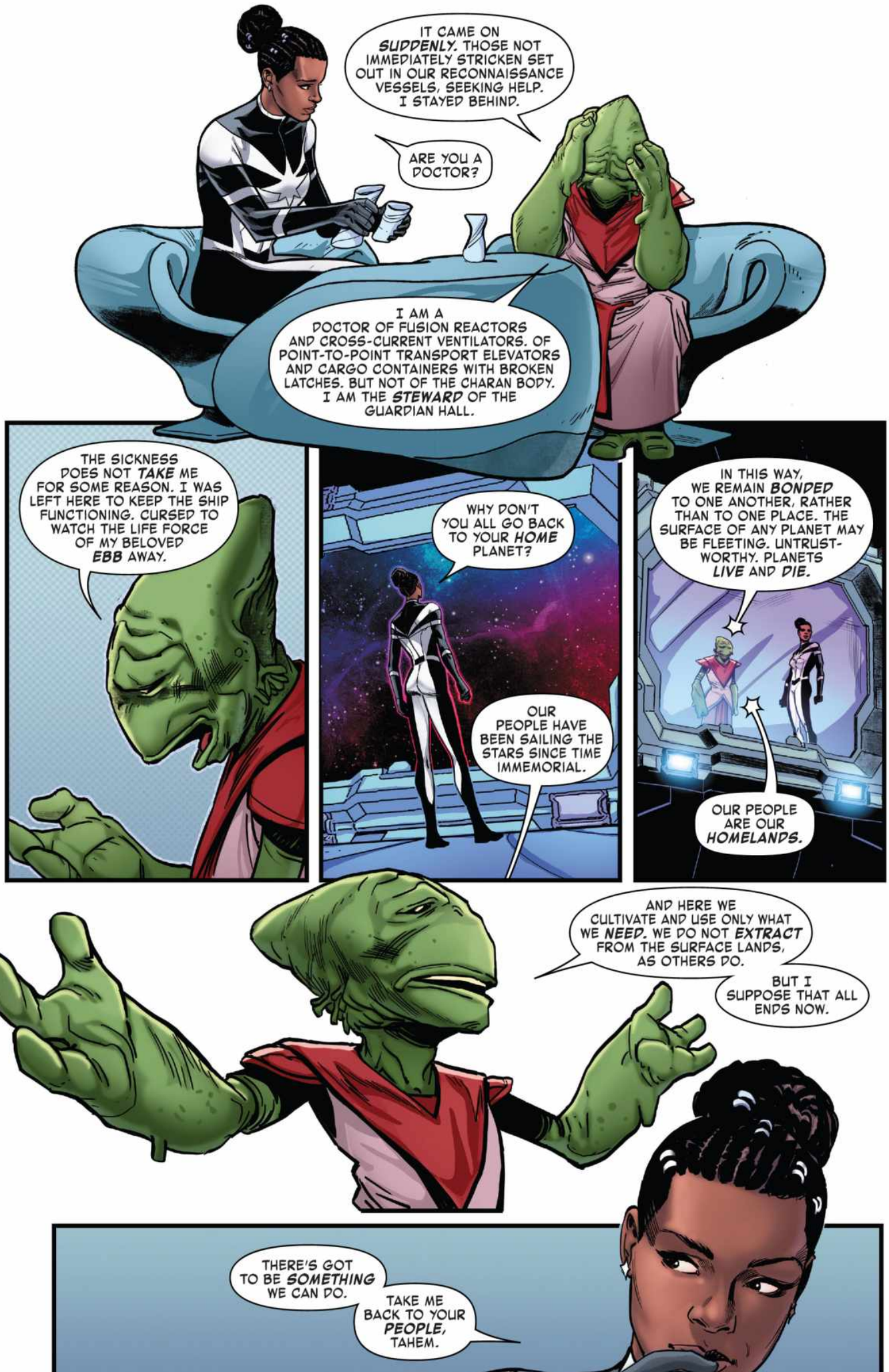

HELLO? HELLO THERE! NOT TO ALARM YOU, BUT--
HELLO. NO MATTER.
MAY I COME DOWN THERE TO SPEAK WITH YOU?
YES...
...YOU MAY.
MONICA RAMBEAU. I'M FROM EARTH.
I AM TAHEM. WELCOME TO THE GUARDIAN HALL OF THE CHAROS.
THANK YOU. I'VE BEEN AROUND THE COSMIC BLOCK A BIT, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME FOR NEVER HAVING HEARD OF YOUR PEOPLE.
YES, WELL. WE ARE A TRAVELING PEOPLE, BY OUR NATURE. CATALOGERS OF SYSTEMS--HENCE WHY I AM FAMILIAR WITH YOUR MODE OF SPEECH.
IN SOME GALAXIES, PEOPLE SING TALES OF OUR MEDICINES, OUR DISCOVERIES.
WE ARE MINDERS OF THE ORDER OF THINGS. GARDENERS OF CALM. KEEPERS OF RELICS.
RELICS?
IN GOOD TIMES, YES. MANY.
BUT THESE ARE NOT GOOD TIMES, MONICA

IS IT OKAY FOR YOU TO LEAVE YOUR *CHARGES?*
THINGS HAVE BEEN DIRE FOR SOME TIME. MY ABSENCE FOR A FEW MINUTES WILL CHANGE LITTLE. AND I WOULD SHAME THEM TO SHOW YOU SUCH POOR *HOSPITALITY.*

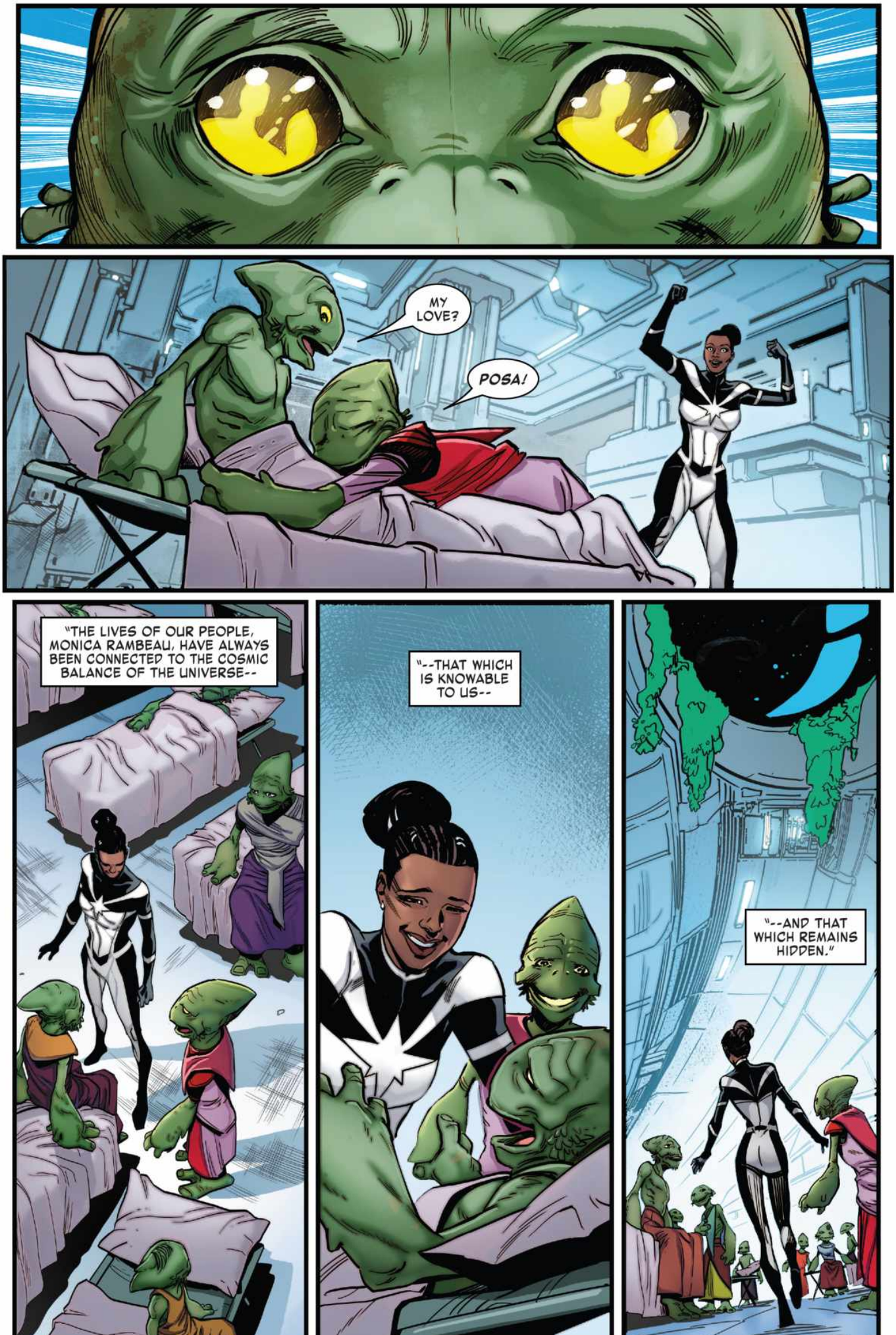
YOU SEEM KINDLY *ENOUGH,* OR I AM TOO *EXHAUSTED* TO PROPERLY FEAR FOR MY LIFE. BUT OUR HOME IS VEILED IN *UNDISCOVERABLE* ENERGY SIGNATURES. AND YOU ENTERED WITH NO ASSISTANCE.
MM. DID YOU EVER HEAR THE PHRASE *"I AM HUMAN-- NOTHING HUMAN IS ALIEN TO ME"?*
CAN'T SAY I HAVE.
NO, OF COURSE NOT. WELL, I AM *ENERGY.* NOTHING ENERGY IS ALIEN TO ME.

AS FOR THE *WHY...*I'M TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE STONE OF HALA. I--
GOODNESS GRACIOUS, DID I SAY SOMETHING *WRONG?*

A RELIC. THAT'S JUST WHAT *POSA* WOULD BE ABLE TO HELP YOU WITH. MY POSA, OUR PEOPLE'S STRONGEST *RELIC HEALER.*
BUT SHE IS *SO SICK.* LIKE THE OTHERS. ALL OF THEM, WITH THE SAME *STRANGE* MALADY. I HAVE BEEN ALONE FOR MANY DAYS, MONICA RAMBEAU.


IT CAME ON SUDDENLY. THOSE NOT IMMEDIATELY STRICKEN SET OUT IN OUR RECONNAISSANCE VESSELS, SEEKING HELP. I STAYED BEHIND.
ARE YOU A DOCTOR?
I AM A DOCTOR OF FUSION REACTORS AND CROSS-CURRENT VENTILATORS. OF POINT-TO-POINT TRANSPORT ELEVATORS AND CARGO CONTAINERS WITH BROKEN LATCHES. BUT NOT OF THE CHARAN BODY. I AM THE STEWARD OF THE GUARDIAN HALL.
THE SICKNESS DOES NOT TAKE ME FOR SOME REASON. I WAS LEFT HERE TO KEEP THE SHIP FUNCTIONING. CURSED TO WATCH THE LIFE FORCE OF MY BELOVED EBB AWAY.
WHY DON'T YOU ALL GO BACK TO YOUR HOME PLANET?
OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAILING THE STARS SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.
IN THIS WAY, WE REMAIN BONDED TO ONE ANOTHER, RATHER THAN TO ONE PLACE. THE SURFACE OF ANY PLANET MAY BE FLEETING. UNTRUSTWORTHY. PLANETS LIVE AND DIE.
OUR PEOPLE ARE OUR HOMELANDS.
AND HERE WE CULTIVATE AND USE ONLY WHAT WE NEED. WE DO NOT EXTRACT FROM THE SURFACE LANDS, AS OTHERS DO.
BUT I SUPPOSE THAT ALL ENDS NOW.
THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO.
TAKE ME BACK TO YOUR PEOPLE, TAHEM.

MY POSA...
WHERE I'M FROM, WE CALL THIS AN X-RAY. IF THERE'S--
WAIT. THERE'S SOMETHING IN HER CHEST. I FEEL IT. LIKE A BLOCKAGE.
YES, THAT IS WHAT POSA SAID BEFORE SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS. SHE EXAMINED THE OTHERS AND FOUND AN OBSTRUCTION WITHIN.
A TUMOR.
I CAN ATTEMPT TO DO A KIND OF LOW-LEVEL RADIATION THERAPY. BUT YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH ME TRYING THIS? I'M NO HEALER EITHER, TAHEM.
THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO TRY. WE MUST.
OKAY.
DISTANT STARS, CAST YOUR LIGHT. CELESTIAL MOTHERS, HEAR US. HEAR US.
THAT'S...THAT'S IT, TAHEM. I'M SORRY. THAT'S ALL I CAN DO.
OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
HEAR US. THOUGH WE ARE AS DUST, WE RIDE THE ZEPHYR OF THE COSMOS IN THY NAME.


MY LOVE?
POSA!
"THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE, MONICA RAMBEAU, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONNECTED TO THE COSMIC BALANCE OF THE UNIVERSE--
"--THAT WHICH IS KNOWABLE TO US--
"--AND THAT WHICH REMAINS HIDDEN."

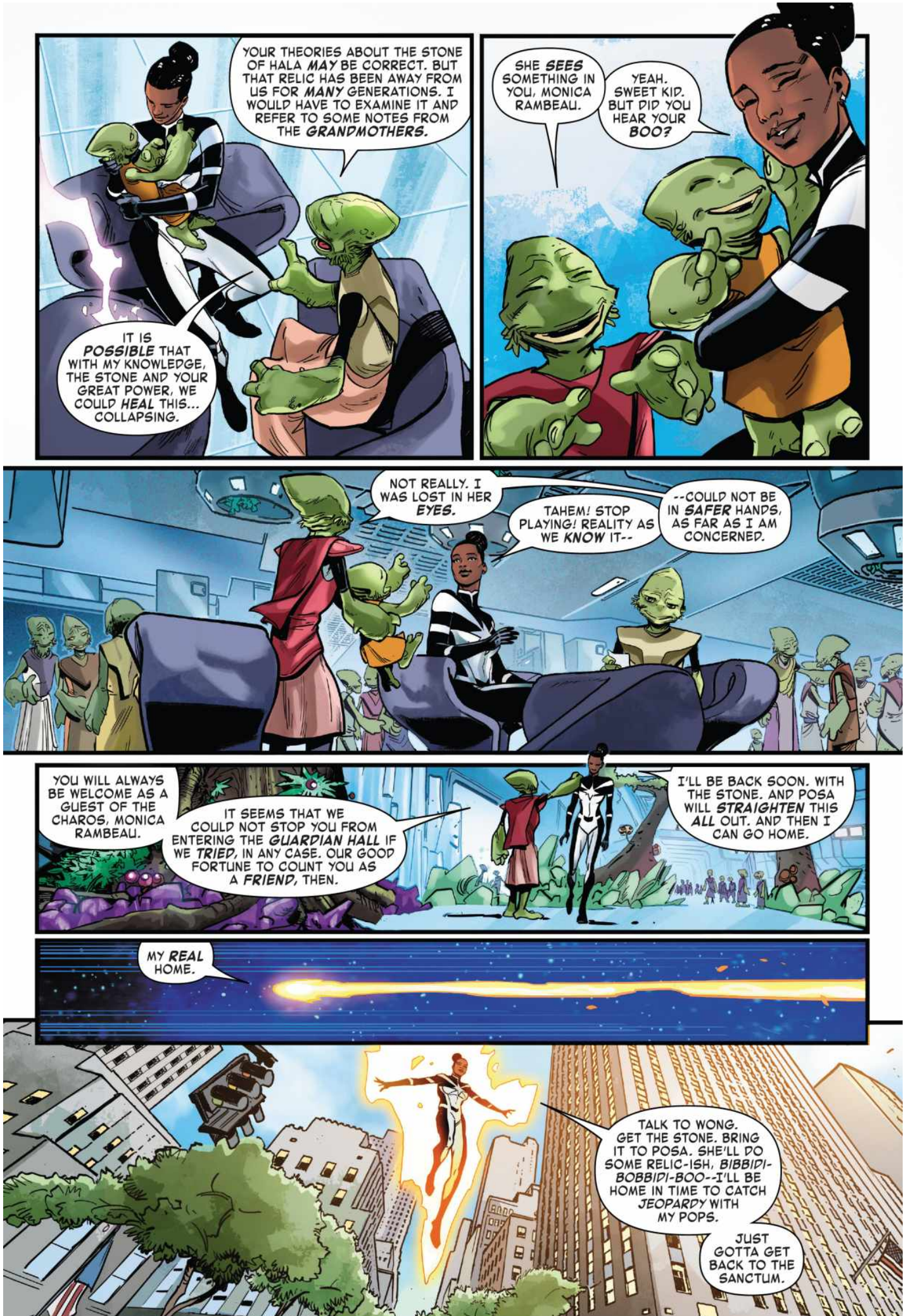
WHEN THE VAST COSMIC EXPANSE IS MALADJUSTED OR IMBALANCED, SO ARE ***OUR PEOPLE.*** WHEN THE GALAXY IN WHICH WE DWELL IS UNWELL, SO TOO ARE ***WE*** UNWELL.
THIS IS TRUE OF ***ALL*** BEINGS, THOUGH MANY DO NOT KNOW IT AS WE DO.

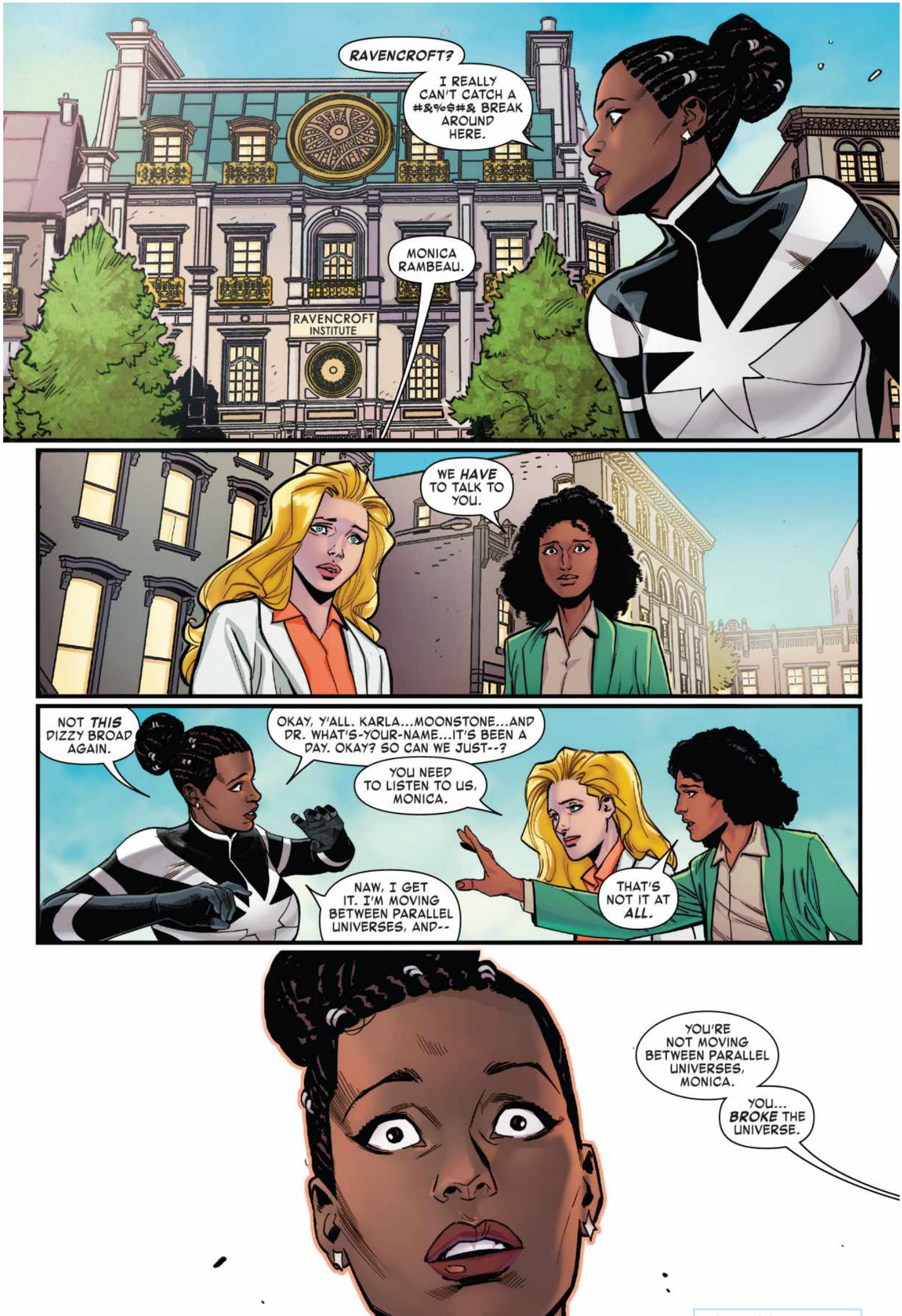
JUST BEFORE I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, MY RESEARCH MADE CLEAR THAT SOMETHING... SOMETHING OUT THERE WAS NOT AS IT ***SHOULD*** BE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU TOLD US THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ***RIPPED*** FROM YOUR CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE.

BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IS SO.
I BELIEVE...

...I BELIEVE THAT THE UNIVERSE ITSELF IS ***CRUMPLING.*** FOLDING IN ON ITSELF. BRINGING FAR-FLUNG EDGES OF ***REALITY*** INTO PROXIMITY.
OUR ***ILLNESS*** WAS AN EARLY SIGN, CONNECTED AS WE ARE TO THE SINEWS OF THE GALAXIES. BUT THIS HAS NOT ENDED.
REALITY AS WE KNOW IT WILL CEASE TO EXIST IF SOMETHING IS NOT DONE.


YOUR THEORIES ABOUT THE STONE OF HALA MAY BE CORRECT. BUT THAT RELIC HAS BEEN AWAY FROM US FOR MANY GENERATIONS. I WOULD HAVE TO EXAMINE IT AND REFER TO SOME NOTES FROM THE GRANDMOTHERS.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WITH MY KNOWLEDGE, THE STONE AND YOUR GREAT POWER, WE COULD HEAL THIS... COLLAPSING.
SHE SEES SOMETHING IN YOU, MONICA RAMBEAU.
YEAH. SWEET KID. BUT DID YOU HEAR YOUR BOO?
NOT REALLY. I WAS LOST IN HER EYES.
TAHEM! STOP PLAYING! REALITY AS WE KNOW IT--
--COULD NOT BE IN SAFER HANDS, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED.
YOU WILL ALWAYS BE WELCOME AS A GUEST OF THE CHAROS, MONICA RAMBEAU.
IT SEEMS THAT WE COULD NOT STOP YOU FROM ENTERING THE GUARDIAN HALL IF WE TRIED, IN ANY CASE. OUR GOOD FORTUNE TO COUNT YOU AS A FRIEND, THEN.
I'LL BE BACK SOON. WITH THE STONE. AND POSA WILL STRAIGHTEN THIS ALL OUT. AND THEN I CAN GO HOME.
MY REAL HOME.
TALK TO WONG. GET THE STONE. BRING IT TO POSA. SHE'LL DO SOME RELIC-ISH, BIBBIDI-BOBBIDI-BOO--I'LL BE HOME IN TIME TO CATCH JEOPARDY WITH MY POPS.
JUST GOTTA GET BACK TO THE SANCTUM.


RAVENCROFT?
I REALLY CAN'T CATCH A #&%$#& BREAK AROUND HERE.
MONICA RAMBEAU.
RAVENCROFT INSTITUTE
WE *HAVE* TO TALK TO YOU.
NOT *THIS* DIZZY BROAD AGAIN.
OKAY, Y'ALL. KARLA...MOONSTONE...AND DR. WHAT'S-YOUR-NAME...IT'S BEEN A DAY. OKAY? SO CAN WE JUST--?
YOU NEED TO LISTEN TO US, MONICA.
NAW, I GET IT. I'M MOVING BETWEEN PARALLEL UNIVERSES, AND--
THAT'S NOT IT AT *ALL*.
YOU'RE NOT MOVING BETWEEN PARALLEL UNIVERSES, MONICA.
YOU... *BROKE* THE UNIVERSE.

NEXT
#4
With nowhere
left to turn and the universe
crumbling around her, Monica must look
to an unexpected source to find answers--
or life as she knows it will be gone forever! And

ZONE